



DRUG DEMAND REDUCTION QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER JULY 2013



35% Designated Drivers Drink and Drive



A new study of designated drivers finds 35 percent of them drink. Many imbibing designated drivers have blood-alcohol levels high enough to impair their driving. Researchers from the University of Florida conducted breath tests on more than 1,000 people, including 165 who said they were designated drivers, as they left bars. They found 65 percent had no blood alcohol content, while 17 percent had levels between 0.02 and 0.049, and 18 percent had levels measuring 0.05 or higher.

In the United States, it is illegal to drive with a blood-alcohol level of 0.08 or higher. Last month, the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) recommended states lower allowable blood-alcohol levels for drivers, from 0.08 percent to 0.05 percent. The NTSB said thousands of people are killed or injured each year by drivers who are not legally drunk, but who are still impaired. Currently about 10,000 people die in alcohol-related car crashes each year.

A person with a blood-alcohol level of 0.05 percent is 38 percent more likely to be involved in a crash, compared with someone who has not been drinking, according to the NTSB. A person with a 0.08 blood-alcohol level is 169 percent more likely to be involved in an accident.

If you look at how people choose their designated drivers, oftentimes they're chosen by who is least drunk or who has successfully driven intoxicated in the past.

Drinking alcohol and driving simply do not go together. The human brain has to deal with many things and process countless data all the time. Alcohol affects attentiveness and one's ability to make quick decisions on the road, react to changes in the environment and execute specific, often difficult maneuvers behind the wheel. When drinking alcohol, driving becomes dangerous – and is potentially lethal! Despite increased public awareness, drinking and drugged driving continues:

- Nearly 13,000 people are killed each year in alcohol-related accidents
- Hundreds of thousands more are injured
- Alcohol-related crashes cost American taxpayers over \$100 billion
- Over 1.4 million arrests for DWI each year (less than 1% of 159 million self-reported episodes of alcohol-impaired driving) and 780,000 are convicted

Two-thirds of those sentenced to incarceration are repeat offenders

The National Transportation Safety Board made a number of other recommendations, such as requiring everyone convicted of drunk driving to put a Breathalyzer interlock device in their car.



Facts About . . .Drunk Driving

- Alcohol remains in the body for up to six hours after drinking. Nearly 75% of drunk drivers do not wear their safety belts.
- On average, someone in the US is killed by a drunk driver every 40 minutes.
- Because alcohol dilutes itself in the water volume of the body in order to travel through it, vital organs that contain a lot of water (such as the brain) are particularly vulnerable to the effects of alcohol.
- Even at BAC levels as low as .02 g/dL, alcohol can affect a person's response time and driving ability. The probability of a crash increases significantly after .05 BAC, and even more rapidly after .08 BAC.
- A driver with a BAC of .08 g/dL is 11 times more likely to be in a fatal accident than a driver who has consumed no alcohol.
- Approximately 75% of fatal crashes occurring between midnight and 3 a.m. involve alcohol
- The highest rates of drunk driving occur among drivers aged 21-24. This age group makes up 35% of alcohol-impaired drivers involved in fatal collisions
- According to one study, a first-time drunk-driving offender has already driven drunk more than 80 times before being arrested.
- Beer is the most common type of alcoholic beverage involved in both DUI arrests and fatal crashes, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). It is also the drink of choice in most cases of binge drinking and underage drinking.
- Drugs other than alcohol (such as [marijuana](#) and [cocaine](#)) are involved in approximately 18% of fatal motor vehicle collisions and have most often been used in combination with alcohol.

BOATING UNDER THE INFLUENCE (BUI)

BUI is just as deadly as drinking and driving!

Did you know:

- A boat operator is likely to become impaired more quickly than a driver, drink for drink?
- The penalties for BUI can include large fines, revocation of operator privileges and serious jail terms?
- The use of alcohol is involved in about a third of all recreational boating fatalities?

Every boater needs to understand the risks of boating under the influence of alcohol or drugs. It is illegal to operate a boat while under the influence of alcohol or drugs in every state.

Dangers of BUI

Alcohol affects judgment, vision, balance and coordination. These impairments increase the likelihood of accidents afloat – for both passengers and boat operators. U.S. Coast Guard data shows that in boating deaths involving alcohol use, over half the victims capsize their boats and/or fell overboard.

Alcohol is even more hazardous on the water than on land. The marine environment – motion, vibration, engine noise, sun, wind and spray – accelerates a drinker's impairment. These stressors cause fatigue that makes a boat operator's coordination, judgment and reaction time decline even faster when using alcohol.

Alcohol can also be more dangerous to boaters because boat operators are often less experienced and less confident on the water than on the highway. Recreational boaters don't have the benefit of experiencing daily boat operation. In fact, boaters average only 110 hours on the water per year.

Spread the word on the dangers of BUI. Many recreational boaters forget that a boat is a vehicle - and that safe operation is a legal and personal responsibility.